

THIS BOOK IS NOT  
FOR CIRCULATION

RULES OF ORDER

—AND—

Standing Committees

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE.

—ALSO—

The Constitution of the State of Texas,

ADOPTED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION CONVENED  
AT AUSTIN SEPTEMBER 6, 1875, AND RATIFIED BY  
THE PEOPLE FEBRUARY 15, 1876.

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## RULES OF ORDER.

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### TOUCHING THE DUTY AND RIGHTS OF THE SPEAKER.

1. He shall take the chair every day at the hour to which the House shall have last adjourned, and immediately call the members to order. If a quorum be in attendance, he shall cause the journals of the preceding day to be read, which may then be corrected by the House.

2. He shall preserve order and decorum; may speak to points of order in preference to members rising from his seat for that purpose; he shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the House made by any two members, on which appeal no member shall speak more than once, unless by leave of the House.

3. He shall rise to put a question, but may state it while sitting.

4. Questions shall be distinctly put in this form, to-wit: "As many of you as are of the opinion that—(as the question may be) say Aye," and after the affirmative voice is expressed, "As many as are of a contrary opinion, say No." If the Speaker doubts, or if a division be called for, the House shall divide; those in the affirmative of the question shall rise from their seats, and remain standing until the clerk has numbered them, and the number has been announced by the Speaker. Those who vote in the negative are then requested to rise, and they are numbered, and the number announced. The yeas and nays may be called for before the decision of the Speaker is announced.

5. The Speaker shall have the right to examine and correct the journal before it is read. He shall have the right to name any member to perform the duties of the chair, but such substitution shall not extend beyond an adjournment.

6. In all cases of election by the House, the Speaker shall vote; in other cases he shall not be required to vote, unless the House be equally divided, or unless his vote, if given to the minority, will make the division equal, and

in case of such equal division, the question shall be lost, except on a question of adjournment.

7. All committees, and the chairmen of the same, shall be appointed by the Speaker, unless otherwise specially directed by the House, in which case, they shall be elected by the House; and if, upon such vote, the number required shall not be elected by a majority of the votes given, the House shall proceed to a second vote, in which a plurality shall prevail; and in case a greater number than that required to compose or complete a committee shall have an equal number of votes, the House shall take another vote.

8. All acts, addresses and joint resolutions shall be signed by the Speaker, as required by the Constitution; and all writs, warrants and *subpoenas* issued by order of the House, shall be under his hand, and attested by the clerk.

9. In case of any disturbance or disorderly conduct in the galleries, the Speaker (or chairman of the whole House) shall have power to order the same to be cleared.

#### RULES OF DECORUM AND DEBATE.

10. When any member is about to speak in the debate, or deliver any matter to the House, he shall rise from his seat, and respectfully address himself to "Mr. Speaker."

11. If any member, in speaking or otherwise, transgressing the rules of the House, the Speaker shall, or any member may, call him to order; in which case the member so called to order shall immediately sit down, unless permitted to explain; and the House shall, if appealed to, decide on the case, but without debate. If the decision be in favor of the member called to order, he shall be at liberty to proceed; if the decision be against him, and the case requires it, he shall be liable to the censure of the House.

12. When two or more members happen to rise at once, the Speaker shall name the one who is first to speak, and his decision shall be final, and not open to debate or appeal.

13. No member shall speak more than twice, either in the House or in Committee of the Whole, on the same question, nor more than half an hour in the House, or one hour in Committee of the Whole, without leave of the House, nor more than once until every member choosing to speak shall have spoken. But the mover of any proposition shall have the right of opening and closing the

debate; and in case the proposition comes from any committee, then the member making the report from the committee shall have the right to open and close the debate in like manner.

14. While the yeas and nays are being called, or votes are being counted, no member shall visit the clerk's table or leave his seat.

15. No member shall vote on any question in the determination of which he is immediately interested, nor in any case where he was not within the bar of the House when the question was put; and when any member shall ask leave to vote, the Speaker shall propound to him the question: "Were you within the bar when the motion was put?"

16. Any member may call for a division of a question when the same will admit of it.

17. Upon a division and count of the House upon any question, no member without the bar shall be counted.

18. Every member who shall be in the House when the question is put shall give his vote, unless the House, for reasons assigned, shall excuse him. No member shall be allowed to make any explanation of a vote he is about to give, or ask to be excused from voting, after the clerk, under the order of the House, shall have commenced calling the yeas and nays.

19. All questions relating to the priority of business shall be decided without debate.

20. There shall be no smoking, eating or cracking nuts allowed in the House during its sitting.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR THE DAY.

21. As soon as the journal is adopted, the unfinished business of the House, if any there be, shall be disposed of; then the Speaker shall call for petitions and memorials; the petitions and memorials having been presented, received and read, shall be disposed of as follows:

1. By motion to reject.
2. To lay on the table.
3. To postpone to a day certain.
4. To commit.
5. To postpone indefinitely.

The order of commitment shall be to—

1. The appropriate standing committee.
2. The Committee of the Whole House.
3. A select committee.

Then reports from committees shall be called for and disposed of, in doing which the Speaker shall call upon each standing committee in regular order, and then upon select committees; and if the Speaker shall not get through the call upon the committees before the House passes to other business, he shall resume the next call where he left off, giving preference to the report last under consideration; *provided*, that whenever any committee shall have occupied the whole time given to reports of committees for any one day, it shall not be in order for such committee to report further until the other committees shall have been called in their turn. This proviso shall not restrain the House from occupying the following day in the consideration of a report *previously* made and undisposed of.

Whenever any committee reports, the report and bill, or other matter accompanying it, shall be considered at once and disposed of.

Then bills and resolutions shall be in order.

After petitions, reports from committees, and bills and resolutions are gone through, the Speaker shall dispose of—

1. Simple resolutions.
2. Messages and Executive communications.
3. Messages from the Senate and Senate amendments.
4. Bills on their third reading.
5. Bills on their second reading.
6. Bills on their first reading.

After the business on the Speaker's table has been reached, no new business shall be introduced without leave of the House.

The order of the day shall always have precedence when the hour for considering the same has arrived.

#### RULES OF THE HOUSE.

22. No bill shall have the force of a law until it has been read on three several days in each House, and free discussion allowed thereon; but in cases of imperative public necessity (which necessity shall be stated in a preamble, or in the body of the bill), four-fifths of the House in which the bill may be pending may suspend this rule, the yeas and nays being taken on the question of suspension, and entered upon the journals.

All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives, but the Senate may amend or reject them as other bills.

23. After a bill has been considered and defeated by either House of the Legislature, no bill containing the same substance shall be passed into a law during the same session. After a resolution has been acted on and defeated, no resolution containing the same substance shall be considered at the same session.

24. A bill may be introduced without motion for leave to bring in a bill.

25. All bills before the House shall be taken up and acted upon in the order in which they are numbered, and it shall be the duty of the chief clerk to number every bill in its regular order, upon its first reading.

26. On the first reading of a bill or joint resolution, it shall be referred.

27. Bills, resolutions, and other papers referred to committees, shall be taken up and acted upon by the committees in the order in which they were referred, and shall be reported back to the House within ten (10) days from the dates of their respective reference, unless the House shall grant a committee additional time for the consideration of a paper referred to it.

28. After a committee has reported on a bill, amendments shall be in order. If no amendments are made, or if those proposed are adopted, then the final question upon the second reading of every bill or resolution originating in the House, and requiring three readings previous to its being passed, shall be, whether it shall be engrossed and read a third time; and bills ordered to be engrossed shall go on the calendar in their regular course. A bill lost at the second reading shall stand as being indefinitely postponed.

29. All bills and joint resolutions which have passed their second reading, and are ordered to be engrossed, shall be presented to the House for their third reading, written in a fair, legible hand, without erasures, interlineations, or additions in the margin thereof.

30. When a bill shall have been committed on its third reading, and reported to the House with amendments, it shall take the course of a bill at its second reading, unless the amendments were made in Committee of the Whole; in which case the House shall immediately proceed to act on the bill; but when a bill has been committed once at its reading, it shall not be in order to recommit it again more than once, unless for some special amendment proposed, and then only by consent of two-thirds present; *provided*, that this shall not apply to bills committed on

third reading and reported to the House with amendments.

31. All bills of a general character, when reported favorably by a committee, shall, on the recommendation of such committee, be printed and a copy laid on the desk of each member before the bill is acted on by the House. All other bills, resolutions, reports, memorials and petitions shall be printed on the order of the House.

32. When a bill shall pass, it shall be certified by the clerk, noting the day of its passage at the foot thereof.

#### SIMPLE RESOLUTIONS.

33. When resolutions are called for, the member offering a resolution shall rise in his place and say: "Mr. Speaker, I offer the following resolution." The Speaker shall then say: "The gentleman from ——— offers the following resolution." The resolution will be read. As soon as the clerk shall have read the same, the Speaker shall say: "What order will the House take on the resolution?" If the second reading of the resolution is called for, the Speaker shall say: "Second reading of the resolution is called. If there is no objection, the resolution will be read a second time." If objection be made to the second reading, it shall be in order for any member to move for second reading, which, if carried, the resolution shall be read again, and it will then be before the House for amendment, adoption, or rejection. If the second reading is not moved, the resolution shall lie over until the following day, when it will come up as business on the Speaker's table.

#### CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS.

34. Concurrent shall take the same course as simple resolutions.

Concurrent resolutions are defined as those which only require concurrence on the part of the Senate, and do not require the approval of the Governor.

#### MOTIONS.

35. No new motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration, shall be admitted under color of amendment, or as a substitute for the motion or proposition under debate.

36. When a motion has been once made and carried in the affirmative or negative, it shall be in order for any

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member of the majority, or prevailing side, to move for a reconsideration thereof; *provided*, it is made on the same day, or the next sitting day, before the order of the day is taken up.

37. When the reading of a paper is called for, and the same is objected to by any member, the House shall determine whether said paper shall be read or not.

38. If a pending question be not disposed of, owing to an adjournment of the House, and be received on succeeding day, no member who has spoken twice on the day preceding shall be allowed to speak again without leave.

39. When motions are made for the reference of a subject to a select or a standing committee, the question for the reference to a standing committee shall be put first.

40. When a motion is made and seconded, it shall be stated by the Speaker; or, being in writing, it shall be handed to the Chair and read aloud by the clerk before debated.

41. Every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Speaker or any member desire it.

42. After a motion is stated by the Speaker, or read by the clerk, it shall be deemed to be in possession of the House, but may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the member who may have seconded the proposition.

43. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received but—

1. To adjourn;
2. To lie on the table;
3. For the previous question;
4. To postpone to a day certain;
5. To commit;
6. To amend; or,
7. To postpone indefinitely.

Which several motions have precedence in the order in which they are arranged; *provided*, no bill shall be tabled until after reference to and report from a committee, and no motion to postpone to a day certain, to commit, or to postpone indefinitely, being decided, shall be again allowed on the same day, at the same stage of the bill or proposition. A motion to strike out the enacting words of a bill shall have precedence of a motion to amend, and if carried, shall be considered equivalent to its rejection.

## PREVIOUS QUESTION.

44. The previous question shall be put in this form: "Shall the main question now be put?" It shall only be admitted when seconded by fifteen (15) members present, and, when carried, its effect shall be to put an end to all debate, and to bring the House to a direct vote—

1. Upon the pending amendment, and so on back to the first amendment offered.

2. Upon amendments reported by a committee, if any.

3. Upon the main question.

45. A call of the House shall not be in order after the previous question is seconded, unless it shall appear, upon actual count by the Speaker, that no quorum is present.

46. On a motion for the previous question there shall be no debate. All incidental questions of order arising after a motion is made for the previous question, and pending such motion, shall be decided, whether on appeal or otherwise, without debate. After a call for the previous question has been sustained by the House, the question shall be put and determined in order as above, without debate on either amendments or the main question, and no motion to adjourn shall be in order after the previous question is seconded until the final vote upon the main question shall be taken.

47. A motion for the previous question shall not be laid on the table.

48. The previous question cannot be applied to the motions to postpone to a day certain, or indefinitely, or to commit, or that a motion be ordered to lie on the table. Nor can these motions be put upon the motion for the previous question.

## BAR OF THE HOUSE.

49. In order to be entitled to vote, and to be within the bar of the House, a member must be on the floor of the hall, and within the walls enclosing the same, and not outside any of the doors leading out of the hall, and he must vote from his seat.

50. No person shall be admitted within the bar of the House but members of the Senate, officers of the general or State government, and heads of departments.

## CALL OF THE HOUSE.

51. Any fifteen members (including the Speaker, if there be one) shall be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members; but this rule shall not be construed as repealing or conflicting with the provisions of Rule No. 45.

Upon a call of the House, whenever all the members shall be present, except those excused, or absent by authority of the House, the call shall be considered suspended, but no motion, except to adjourn, or in connection with the subject matter upon which the call was ordered, shall be in order, nor shall any member be permitted to leave the hall until after the subject matter upon which the call was ordered shall have been disposed of, without permission of the Speaker.

## NAMES TO BE CALLED ALPHABETICALLY.

52. Upon calls of the House, and in taking the yeas and nays on any question, the names of the members shall be called alphabetically.

## ADJOURNMENT.

53. A motion to adjourn, except as hereinbefore provided in Rule 46, and a motion to fix the day to which the House shall adjourn, shall always be in order. These motions, and the motion to lie on the table, shall be decided without debate.

## RULES SUSPENDED OR CHANGED.

54. No standing rule or order of the House shall be rescinded or changed without one day's notice being given of the motion thereof. Nor after such notice, shall any rule be rescinded or changed, except by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. Neither shall any rule of the House be suspended, nor the order of business as established by the rules of the House, be postponed or changed, except by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present.

## WHERE RULES ARE SILENT.

55. On any question of order or parliamentary practice, where these rules are silent or inexplicit, Jefferson's Man-

ual, or Barclay's Digest of Parliamentary Law shall be considered as authority.

#### ABSENTEES.

56. No member shall absent himself from the sittings of the House without leave, unless in case of sickness; and every member absents himself without leave, shall for each day of absence, forfeit the pay allowed him by law.

It shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present to excuse absentees, and no member shall be excused upon his own motion.

57. The names of absentees shall appear upon the journals.

#### JOURNAL.

58. The proceedings of the House, when not acting in Committee of the Whole, shall be entered on the journal, as concisely as possible, care being taken to detail a true and accurate account of the proceedings.

59. Every vote of the House shall be entered on the journal, with a concise statement of the question; and a brief statement of the contents of each petition, memorial, or paper, presented to the House shall also be inserted on the journal.

#### SERGEANT-AT-ARMS.

60. It shall be the duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms to attend the House during its sittings; to have charge of the chamber of the House of Representatives, subordinate to the Speaker, and the committee rooms and offices belonging thereto; to keep the same in order, and to execute the commands of the House from time to time, together with all such process, issued by authority thereof as shall be directed to him by the Speaker.

#### CLERKS.

61. The Chief or Assistant Clerk shall rise and remain standing whilst reading any documents to the House.

62. The Assistant Clerk of the House shall, in the event of the absence, resignation or death of the Chief Clerk, take charge of and attend to all the duties of the office until his successor shall be elected.

63. No extra compensation shall be allowed to any clerk or other officer of the House.

#### REPORTERS.

64. Reporters shall be assigned appropriate and convenient seats in the House, by direction of the Speaker.

#### WITNESSES.

65. The rules for paying witnesses summoned to appear before the House, or any of its committees, shall be as follows: For each day a witness shall attend, the sum of two dollars; for each mile he shall travel in coming to or going from the place of examination, the sum of twelve and a half cents each way; but nothing shall be paid for traveling home when the witness was at the place of trial when summoned. The certificate of the chairman of the committee, before which a witness is summoned, shall be sufficient authority for the same to be paid.

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

66. In forming a Committee of the Whole House, the Speaker shall leave his chair, and a chairman to preside in committee shall be appointed by the Speaker.

67. Upon bills committed to a Committee of the Whole House, the bill shall first be read throughout by the clerk, and then again be read and debated by clauses, leaving the preamble to be last considered. The body of the bill shall not be effaced or interlined, but all amendments, noting the page or line, shall be duly entered by the clerk on a separate paper, as the same shall be agreed to by a committee, and so reported to the House. After report, the bill shall again be subject to be debated and amended by clauses, before a question to engross be taken.

68. All amendments made to an original motion in Committee of the Whole shall be incorporated with the motion, and so reported.

69. In event that the Committee of the Whole at any sitting, shall, for want of time, fail to complete the amendments proposed on any bill or resolution under their consideration, or desire to postpone the consideration thereof, it may, on motion made at any time in the committee, rise, report progress, and have leave to sit again generally, or at a day certain.

70. All amendments made to a report committed to a Committee of the Whole House shall be noted and reported, as in the case of bills.

71. No motion or proposition for a tax or charge upon the people shall be discussed the day on which it was made or offered.

72. No sum or quantum of tax or duty, voted by a Committee of the Whole House, shall be increased in the House, until the motion or proposition for such increase shall first be discussed and voted in a Committee of the Whole House, and so in respect to the time of its continuance.

73. All proceedings touching appropriation of money shall be discussed in Committee of the Whole House, and no appropriations of money shall be made except by bill.

74. The Rules of proceeding in the House shall be observed in committee so far as the same be applicable.

#### STANDING COMMITTEES.

76. The Standing Committees shall be as follows, in their order:

1. Committee on Judiciary, No. 1.
2. Judiciary Committee, No. 2.
3. Committee on Constitutional Amendments.
4. Committee on Internal Improvements.
5. Committee on State Affairs.
6. Committee on Finance.
7. Committee on Education.
8. Committee on Public Health, Vital Statistics and History of Texas.
9. Committee on Commerce and Manufactures.
10. Committee on Public Lands and Land Office.
11. Committee on Federal Relations.
12. Committee on Agriculture and Stock Raising.
13. Committee on Counties and County Boundaries.
14. Committee on the Penitentiary.
15. Committee on Military Affairs.
16. Committee on Indian Affairs.
17. Committee on Towns and City Corporations.
18. Committee on Roads, Bridges and Ferries.
19. Committee on Claims and Accounts.
20. Committee on Public Debt.
21. Committee to examine Comptroller's and Treasurer's offices.
22. Committee on Privileges and Elections.
23. Committee on Printing.
24. Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds.
25. Committee on Private Land Claims.

26. Committee on Engrossed Bills.

27. Committee on Enrolled Bills.

28. Committee on Contingent Expenses.

29. Committee on Rules.

30. Committee on State Asylums.

77. The Committee on Engrossed Bills, in addition to their duties as such, are also Committee on Style, and it shall be their duty to see that all bills passed by the House are correct, in style, orthography, punctuation, and in whatever else it is within the province of the committee to correct.

78. It shall be in order for the Committee on Enrolled Bills to report at any time.

79. No committee shall sit during the time the House is in session, without special leave first being granted.

80. A majority of a committee shall constitute a quorum for business; and no report shall be made to the House unless ordered by a majority of such quorum. The views of the minority may be submitted in writing by any member of the Committee.

81. As soon as practicable, it shall be the duty of the chairman, or chairman *pro tem.* of the different committees to notify the Speaker in writing of the time fixed for the meeting of their respective committees, which information the Speaker shall cause to be posted up in a conspicuous place in the hall as soon as practicable.

82. If, after due notification, the members of any committee fail to meet at the time and place designated, the chairman of such committee may instruct the Sergeant-at-arms to arrest and compel the attendance of unexcused absentees.

#### AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.

All amendments proposed to the Constitution shall be subject to the rules that govern the proceedings in bills, except that they shall in all cases be read on three several days, and shall only be passed by a vote of two-thirds of the members elect to the House. (Constitution, Article XVII., Section 1.) When a proposed amendment to the Constitution is under consideration, the votes of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to decide an amendment thereto, or any collateral or incidental question thereto, short of the final question.



## JOINT RULES OF THE TWO HOUSES.

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### DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO HOUSES.

1. In every case of an amendment in one House, and dissented to in the other, if either House shall request a conference, and appoint a committee for that purpose, and the other House shall appoint a committee to confer, such committees shall, at a convenient hour to be agreed on by their chairmen, meet in their conference chamber, and state to each other, verbally or in writing, as either shall choose, the reasons of their respective Houses for and against the amendment, and confer freely thereon.

2. After each House shall have adhered to their disagreement, a bill or resolution is lost.

3. When a bill or resolution, which shall have passed in one House, is rejected in the other, notice thereof is to be given to the House in which the same may have passed.

### COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE HOUSES.

4. When a message shall be sent from the Senate to the House of Representatives, it shall be announced at the door of the House by the Doorkeeper, and shall be respectfully communicated to the Chair by the person by whom it may be sent.

5. The same ceremony shall be observed when a message shall be sent from the House of Representatives to the Senate.

6. Messages shall be sent by such persons as a sense of propriety, in each House, may determine to be proper.

7. While bills are on their passage between the two Houses, they shall be on paper, and under the signature of the secretary or clerk of each House respectively.

8. Each House transmits to the other all papers on which any bill or resolution may be founded.

ENROLLING AND SIGNING OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS, AND  
THEIR PRESENTATION TO THE GOVERNOR.

9. After a bill shall have passed both Houses, it shall be duly enrolled on papers by the enrolling clerk of the House of Representatives or of the Senate, as the bill may have originated in the one or the other House, and properly signed by the presiding officer of each House, as required by the Constitution, before it shall be presented to the Governor.

10. When bills are enrolled, they shall be examined by a joint committee of three from the Senate, and three from the House of Representatives, appointed as a standing committee for that purpose, who shall carefully compare the enrollment with the engrossed bills, as passed in the Houses, and correcting any errors that may be discovered in the enrolled bills, make their report forthwith to the respective Houses.

11. After examination and report, each bill shall be signed in the respective Houses, first by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, then by the President of the Senate, in accordance with Art. III, Sec. 38, Constitution.

12. After a bill shall have thus been signed in each House, it shall be presented by said committee to the Governor for his approbation, it being first endorsed on the back of the roll, certifying in which House the same originated, which endorsement shall be signed by the secretary or clerk (as the case may be) of the House in which the same did originate, and shall be entered on the journal of each House. The said committee shall report the day of presentation to the Governor, which time shall be carefully entered on the journal of each House.

13. All orders, resolutions and votes, which are to be presented to the Governor of the State for his approbation, shall also, in the same manner, be previously enrolled, examined and signed, and shall be presented in the same manner, and by the same committee, as provided in the case of bills.

ELECTIONS BY JOINT VOTE OF THE TWO HOUSES.

14. In all elections by joint vote of the two Houses of the Legislature, the Senate will, upon invitation, meet the House in hall at the hour agreed upon.

The President of the Senate shall take a seat at the right

of the Speaker, and the Senators shall take seats in front of the Speaker's desk. The Speaker of the House shall preside. The names of the Senators shall then be alphabetically called; after which the names of the Representatives shall be called in like manner; and if a quorum of both Houses answer to their names, the two Houses will proceed with the business for which they have met. The President of the Senate shall first call for nominations by Senators, and the Speaker of the House shall then call for nominations by Representatives. Nominations being made, the names of the Senators shall be called by their secretary, and their votes recorded by him. The names of the Representatives shall then be called by their clerk, and their votes recorded by him, and the result shall be handed to and announced by the Speaker. Should a majority be required to elect, and no person receive a majority, the voting shall be repeated until an election is made. After the conclusion of the election for which the two Houses have met in joint session, the Senate shall retire to its chamber, and the result of the joint vote shall be entered on the journal of each house.

15. If a quorum of either House shall fail to attend a joint session, or absent themselves therefrom without the permission of such House, the members of the House so wanting a quorum, if ten in number, shall have the right to compel the attendance of the absentees, in accordance with its own rules; and after a reasonable time, if a quorum is not obtained, the joint session may be adjourned by the vote of a majority of the members of either House; which vote shall be taken by the presiding officer of either House, on the motion of any one of its members, without debate.

16. If no choice shall have been made on the first ballot or vote, at any time thereafter the joint session may be adjourned, with or without naming another day for meeting, by the vote of a majority of either House, which vote shall be taken by the presiding officer of either House, on the motion of any one of its members, without delay.